

TRAIL & LANDSCAPE



*A Publication Concerned With
Natural History and Conservation*

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

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The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

— Founded 1879 —

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Objectives of the Club: To promote the appreciation, preservation and conservation of Canada's natural heritage; to encourage investigation and publish the results of research in all fields of natural history and to diffuse the information on these fields as widely as possible; to support and co-operate with organizations engaged in preserving, maintaining or restoring environments of high quality for living things.

Club Publications: THE CANADIAN FIELD-NATURALIST, a quarterly devoted to reporting research in all fields of natural history relevant to Canada, and TRAIL & LANDSCAPE, a quarterly providing articles on the natural history of the Ottawa Valley and on Club activities.

Field Trips, Lectures and other natural history activities are arranged for local members; see "Coming Events" in this issue.

Membership Fees: Individual (yearly) \$40

Family (yearly) \$45

Hard copy of Canadian Field-Naturalist \$30

Subscriptions to Trail & Landscape:

(libraries and institutions): \$33 per year (volume)

Postage for U.S. and other foreign countries please add \$5

Single copies of recent issues: \$6 each postpaid

Index to Vols. 1 - 20: \$10 postpaid.

Membership application, correspondence:

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Views expressed in **Trail & Landscape** are not necessarily those of the OFNC

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Published by
The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club
Box 35069, Westgate P.O., Ottawa, Ontario, K1Z 1A2

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January - March 2011

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Welcome New Members

Ottawa Area

Jeremy R. Brammer & Family
Alexandra M. Brett & Family
Maria E. Bronson
Joan Brown
S. Barry Cottam
Bill & Agnes Davis
Christiana & Peter Duschinsky
Alma R. Estable/John T. Sydor
Mary Forbes & Family
Donald D. Hackett & Family
Jane Inch
Constance Lim & Family
Isabel McFetridge
Hugh G. Metcalfe
Clair M. Momot
J. Luke Stephenson

Gatineau Area

Barry Martin
Hélène Schneider

Henry Steger
Chair, Membership Committee
November 2010

The President's Perspective

Winter 2010 /11

We're on a Roll!

What a year! Your club has been quite active, with a number of changes in 2010 and it looks like 2011 will be just as busy. We are moving ahead with energy and enthusiasm.

We are now in our new home in the renovated Canadian Museum of Nature. The theatre is big enough to let us publicize our meetings. Unfortunately we lost our coffee and cookies because of a new catering policy at the museum.



The Fletcher Wildlife Garden celebrated its 20th anniversary in June—certainly an excellent example of what can be accomplished when a few individuals are willing to develop a great idea.

The Conservation Committee has written an excellent paper on conserving the Greenspace—see the website www.ofnc.ca. Conservation is such a critical aspect of our *raison d'être*.

A major editing and publishing blitz is getting the CFN up-to-date thanks to Francis Cook.

The CFN is going electronic so the scientific research community can access its excellent articles—and the Club can save some money. Hard copies will still be printed, however, on a cost-recovery basis.

Our renewal forms have been redesigned—strongly requesting email addresses and encouraging a response with a return envelope.

Membership rates have increased (sorry about that) to help us maintain programs.

Yes, I had said that they would not, but I was wrong. Like a politician!

We now have name tags at the monthly meetings so we don't have to stumble or mumble with someone's name.

The website has a new spot, Lend a Hand, to let you know where help is needed—and we need a lot of helping hands.

The Fletcher Wildlife Garden is getting a new bridge over the pond that should be ready for spring.

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club is now on Facebook. Maybe soon I will be too. How can we best use this tool?

Our club for young naturalists, ages 8 to 18 years old, is being re-energized thanks to a donation and endowment in memory of long time member, Martha Camfield. The funds will be used to promote The Macoun Club as well as enhance its activities. Meetings are every Saturday morning.

For the first time a yahoo discussion group was used to organize a field trip. The trip was to the Barron River Canyon of Algonquin Park led by Jeff Skevington.

We are negotiating with the Canadian Museum of Nature on the charge for use of the theatre for our monthly meetings starting next September. We have enjoyed free accommodation to date.

What about selling ad space in *Trail & Landscape* and on our Website to get more revenue? Anyone want to lead that charge?

We are investigating ways in which we can accept payment electronically without it costing too much. This would be helpful for membership payments but it is becoming almost essential for international CFN subscribers.

What next? Council is looking at how it can be more cost effective and less labour intensive. But, the real driver is ensuring the Club is vibrant and relevant today and well positioned for tomorrow.

Ideas? Suggestions? How can we best get your input?

Ann MacKenzie

Conservation Matters

Stan Rosenbaum

Focus of the Committee

In recent years, the conservation committee's focus has been on interactions between us and the decision-makers (i.e. "political action"). At present, few Club members seem to be available to do this kind of work. In earlier times, the committee was more concerned with preparing biological inventories. Perhaps the committee should return to this, or follow both thrusts.

Greenbelt Coalition

At Council's request, the committee's policy document that was submitted to the NCC's Greenbelt Master Plan review team last September, has been posted on the OFNC website (www.ofnc.ca/conservation/November2009.php). The Coalition's policy paper has still not been submitted to the NCC. It seems this is due to the Coalition's preoccupation with trying to stop land clearance and drainage for the proposed new Trade Centre at the Airport. Meanwhile, the NCC is busy preparing the Master Plan.

Constance Bay Sandhills

An exchange of emails was made with the City of Ottawa's Forestry Services department (Jason Pollard). Their plans for restoring the natural state of the sandhills are well-developed as far as 2012. (See *T&L* Vol 44 No. 1 pp 106-127). Even so, Jason invites the OFNC to contact him (Jason Pollard, Forester, at 613-580-2424 ext 16012, or Jason.Pollard@ottawa.ca) with any questions, thoughts or suggestions. This is an opportunity for cooperation, with the *T&L* articles as a starting point.

South March Highlands

The Coalition to Protect the South March Highlands are trying to save 72 acres of forest north of the Beaver Pond. This area contains 679 animal species, 10 distinct habitats and 18 species-at-risk. It has the potential to become Ottawa's Great Forest and national treasure. The outgoing Council put the development on hold and recommended further action to the incoming Council. The OFNC encourages its members to read more about this issue on the Club website (www.ofnc.ca/bulletin.php#SMH) and send a letter (sample letter is available on the website) to their council member to support this motion.

Ten Reasons to Care about Biological Diversity

1. "Because it's there" or The Moral Argument: We did not create life on earth and it is not our place to destroy it. We share this planet with millions of other species, and it violates all our civilized notions of respect and fairness to shove another species out of existence.

2. "Don't pop rivets on the spaceship" or The Practical Argument: Nature and all its creatures are one complex, interrelated machine. Killing species is like randomly popping out rivets on the spaceship earth; one or two are not likely to be noticed, but at some point the whole thing is going to come apart. To survive we depend on the whole interdependent ecosystem.

3. "There's gold in them thar hills" or The Economic Argument: We have not even begun to discover the economic potential of other species. A few dozen plants and animals provide the bulk of our food, clothing, and building materials. Many, many species are being lost before anyone has given any thought to their economic potential.

4. "Isn't nature beautiful?" or The Aesthetic Argument: Nature is beautiful and interesting too. Our lives are enriched by it. Our artists and writers are inspired by it. Our hearts are uplifted by the grandness of wild places. We all lose when such beauty is lost.

5. "Incest is for idiots" or The Genetic Strength Argument: In genetic diversity is the strength to adapt and survive. All plant and animal breeders know that a key to improving domesticated species is to replenish them with genes from wild stocks. With the loss of species we impoverish the future gene pool for agriculture and other natural resource-based industries.

6. "Oh no! Bread mould in my petri dish" or The Research Argument: Everyone knows that penicillin was derived from bread mould. But did you know that more than half of all modern medicines can be traced to wild organisms? Thousands of species are being thoughtlessly destroyed before they can be thoroughly researched.

7. "Inquiring minds want to know" or The Education Argument: Nature is

fascinating. Behaviours and adaptations of plants and animals can be as mind-expanding as they are interesting. In each generation, discovering the marvels of nature can be the spark that ignites a lifelong quest for knowledge.

8. "It's better than television" or The Recreational Argument: Outdoor recreation is a connection to nature that most of us feel is essential. Biodiversity supports numerous outdoor activities from hunting and fishing to birdwatching and spelunking. In fact, outfitting for camping, canoeing, hiking and related nature study has emerged as one of our fastest growing industries.

9. "Consider the lilies of the fields" or The Philosophy Argument: Humans have always asked the universal questions: Who are we? Why are we here? An appreciation of nature may not give the final answers but it shapes our understanding that we are only a part of a much larger creation.

10. "Were there really elephants Mommy?" or The Legacy Argument: Can you honestly say you don't care that the world we leave our children won't have wild elephants or rhinoceroses? Or a million other species that were here when we came? Or vast prairies? Or rainforests? Or wilderness of any kind? If you can say you don't care, then let's hope the future children of the world don't care either. They won't have a choice.

Editor's note: This piece was sent to me by a OFNC and Saskatchewan Nature Society member who saw it in the 2010 Fall issue of *Nature Views*, a publication of Nature Saskatchewan. Originally from an article written by David Braun, Former State Director, TNC Texas, it was part of the article printed in the *Prairie Conservation Action Plan Newsletter* (Volume 2, Number 3) by Michelle Yaskwich. I agree with Roy, it definitely was worth reprinting in *T&L*.

What is it?

2: Western Conifer Seed Bug

Paul Catling and Henri Goulet

“What is that bug that keeps coming in?”



Fig. 1. Western Conifer Seed Bug (Leptoglossus occidentalis) from western North America is about 18 mm long. Photo by H. Goulet, south Ottawa, Sept. 2007.*

Until 1969 the western conifer seed bug, *Leptoglossus occidentalis*, was confined to western North America from Alberta and British Columbia south to California and Texas. By the 1970s it had moved east to Wisconsin and it reached Ontario in the 1980s. During the 1990s it moved eastward reaching the St. Lawrence valley as well as New York and Pennsylvania. Most recently it has been found in Europe (Italy and England). They often become abundant in newly invaded territory.

In October and November these bugs invade buildings as they search for a safe place

to spend the winter. Although this often causes some alarm, they are harmless, and can be removed to the outside with a piece of tissue paper. They are not household pests and they do not bite or sting. With straw-like mouthparts, they pierce the scales of cones and suck out the seed pulp from the seeds of pines, spruces and other conifers.

During the entire month of October we see up to a dozen of these insects at the south entrances of buildings on the Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa. They are also brought in for identification from the surrounding urban areas where there are evergreen trees. In south-central British Columbia, they sometimes enter buildings by the hundreds and create a lemon-like odour inside.

How did they travel from the west to the east? With planted conifers in built up areas and around farms, the prairies are not the treeless barrier they once were. However, it seems most likely that these bugs travel like us: in cars, planes and trains. When they are abundantly flying about in search of hibernacula, they could readily enter the cargo bay of a plane, but are probably more likely to arrive as stowaways in luggage and pockets. Imagine leaving a home in BC that has a lot of them. A few hide among the socks and stockings in an open suitcase, and they arrive a few hours later in a new home on the other side of the continent, are unpacked, find a crack in a wall beside a window to spend the winter, then leave in the spring and establish a new colony in the pines around the house. Kelowna to Ottawa, free passage and a three thousand kilometre expansion in a single year! Of course transatlantic flights are also available and *Leptoglossus occidentalis* was first recorded in Europe in northern Italy in 2009.

Identification:

These insects are true bugs (Hemiptera), not beetles, because the mandibles and maxillae are formed into a straw-like proboscis. They belong to the family of leaf-footed bugs (Coreidae), many of which have expansions on the hind leg which are sometimes leaf-like affording camouflage. This species is $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long (1.5-2 cm). The white zigzag stripe across the midpoint is distinctive. Probably as a defense, they spread wings revealing a wasp-coloured abdomen.

Another bug which has recently gained notoriety in North America might be confused with the western conifer seed bug. Some believe that the brown marmorated stink bug, *Halyomorpha halys* (Fig. 2) should win the competition for the pest of the year in the USA in 2010. It is wider than the conifer seed bug, lacks the white colour crossing the centre of the wings and also lacks the broadened areas on the hind legs. Originating from Asia, marmorated stink bugs are apparently not yet established in the Ottawa Valley but have been found at the Canadian border. They have been in the US since 1998 and have become major pests of apples, grapes and tomatoes in some areas. When crushed or irritated they emit a skunk-like odour. Like conifer seed bugs, they are very effective hitchhikers. For more information on marmorated stink bugs see <http://ento.psu.edu/extension/factsheets/brown-marmorated-stink-bug>.



Fig. 2. Brown marmorated stink bug (*Halyomorpha halys*) from Asia is about 17 mm long. Photo by Susan Ellis, Bugwood.org (used with permission).

Acknowledgements:

Thanks to Michael Swartz for useful suggestions.

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News from the FWG: 2010

Christine Hanrahan



The year 2010 was a very special one at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden (FWG), for it marked our 20th anniversary! Appropriately enough, 2010 was also the United Nations designated International Year for Biodiversity, and what after all, is the FWG about, but promoting and creating biodiversity. We felt that the two events meshed well!

Backyard Garden News

The big American Elm by the BYG pond, which began dying off last year, was almost dead by this summer and so we felt that for safety reasons it should be cut down. While we typically leave standing dead trees, this was in an area that gets a lot of visitors. We also took down a couple of Black Locusts that were shading the

rockery which is planted with sun-loving plants.

The BYG changes from year to year, as some plants thrive, others die, some are taken out because they are not doing well, others are planted. A garden is a constantly changing entity which is why it is so interesting to revisit over the different seasons and over the years.

However, as any of the BYG volunteers can tell you, it takes a lot of work to maintain the BYG. If you like gardening, like nature, enjoy working with congenial companions, and have Friday mornings free, we'd like to hear from you! Volunteers meet from spring through early fall. Contact the FWG at either 613-234-6767 or fletcher@ofnc.ca.

FWG 20th Anniversary Celebrations

In June, 1990, the OFNC, and representatives of many other organizations, gathered at the site of the FWG to celebrate the official opening of the garden. Twenty years on, the garden has been transformed. It is a place of thriving vegetation and home to a myriad of wildlife. All of this is due to the hard work of so many volunteers in those now far-off days, and to the vision of Peter and Judy Hall and Jeff Harrison, the co-founders, and heart and soul of the garden. And so, on Saturday, June 19, 2010, dozens of people, many of them old friends from nearly two decades ago, gathered at the FWG for a very special celebration. A wonderful, heartwarming time was had by all who attended and many memories were evoked and reminiscences shared, on a sunny afternoon at the garden. For more about the party, please see Hanrahan 2010.

Walks and Events

Walks

The Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections and the Canadian Botanical Association, had a joint meeting in Ottawa in June. They asked for a tour of the FWG, and about a dozen people (from various parts of Europe and North America) participated, after which they made a donation to the garden. In July, a group of women from the University Women's Club, in town for a conference, had a tour of the garden. A local senior's group from the Fisher Park Community Association was given a tour in July when the garden was at its peak. And before school let out, a grade 3-4 class from a nearby school was also given a guided tour around the garden.

Events

Native Plant Sale

The plant sale was another success. Always held on the first Saturday in June, this is now becoming an established event for local gardeners. We raised about \$3200

which helped defray costs of the dam and bridge at the Amphibian Pond (more on this below). Many thanks as always to the crew of volunteers who made this happen. They not only grow plants from seed for the sale, but work on publicity and promotion before the event and set up on the day of. A lot of work, but well worth it.

Bird Events

The Great Backyard Bird Count was held between the 12 and 15 February. Our “backyard” covers the FWG and the Arboretum. Bird numbers were relatively low this time and we had a grand total of 12 species. This count, organized by Cornell University and held across North America on these dates, is something we have taken part in for some years now, under the auspices of David Hobden.

Wildlife Festival

We took part in the Wildlife Awareness Event at Billings Bridge Mall, as part of National Wildlife Week, organized by the Ottawa Wildlife Festival (www.ncrwildlifefestival.org/). In 2009 the event was held on one day only, but in 2010 it ran for the weekend (Saturday and Sunday). A number of people stopped by our booth and expressed an interest in the garden, both as visitors and as potential volunteers.

Corporate Volunteers

Approximately 14 Green Team volunteers from Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC) came to the FWG for the fourth year in a row. A number of them helped Diane in the Butterfly Meadow which meant that a tremendous amount of work got done in a short period!

In August, 20 people from the Export Development Corporation volunteered their time at the garden, again assisting Diane in the Butterfly Meadow, as well as helping with other activities.

DSV Days

In 2009, we developed a plan for removing Dog-strangling Vine (DSV) from key areas. We thought it would be useful to invite the public to help us with this and dedicated two days in September to this end. About 20 people took part each time and all were enthusiastic about helping to control the spread of this invasive weed.

Outreach

We continue to offer advice, when asked, to both groups and individuals wishing to create wildlife friendly gardens, or find out more about invasive species. In 2010, we donated Swamp Milkweed to the Children’s Garden at Leggett Park on Main Street. A contact person from the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group, requested

information about planting a butterfly garden on the hospital grounds. And a native plant garden being initiated near the Nesbitt Building at Carleton University was given advice on local native plants. A community group from Ottawa East doing trail improvements along the Rideau River, borrowed our weed wrenches a couple of times.

Student Projects

Although we did not have any students working on DSV for the first time in several years, there were two student projects at the garden. One focused on the mating habits of American Toads in our Amphibian Pond and took place, necessarily, over a very short period of time.

The second project looked at the behavioural mimicry of syrphid flies, and continued through the summer, with visits made every few weeks.

Filming at the Garden

We received several requests from film crews to use the garden for various purposes. We said yes to the first one that asked, Wild Kratts, who were filming an educational segment on nature for kids, but declined further requests due to the disturbance factor.

Scouts

A local scout troop, the 1st Blackburn Hamlet, made seven beautiful and very impressive bird roosting boxes for us. They had contacted us early in the year to see if we had any suggestions for ways in which they might help out, and roosting boxes were definitely high on our list. They even installed them for us. One was taken over a couple of days later by a red squirrel, who very industriously constructed his nest inside.

Problems

The spring and fall of 2010 were both remarkably problem free, which came as something of a relief after the horrendous spring we had in 2009, with countless large fires and parties in the Ash Woods. One fire was set in the party spot from last year, early on in spring,



Bird roosting box.

Call for Nominations for OFNC Awards

The Awards Committee

It is time to think back and consider those OFNC members (and, in one case, even non-members) who, by virtue of their special efforts and talents, are deserving of special recognition.

The Club has seven awards: Honorary Membership, Member of the Year Award, George McGee Service Award, Conservation Award for OFNC Members, Conservation Award for Non-Members, Anne Hanes Natural History Award, and the Education Award.

An elaboration of each of these categories is presented in this centre-fold, together with space to put the nominee's name and accomplishments. (Additional sheets can be used if needed.) If necessary, the Awards Committee will seek out more information on individuals nominated, but of course, the more information you provide, the easier it is for the committee to make a decision. An informative article on the background of these awards, and a list of recipients, was published in Volume 33, Number 4, of *Trail & Landscape*. Last year's awardees are highlighted in Volume 44, Number 3 of *T&L*. The deadline for the submission of nominations is January 31, 2011. Nominate as many individuals as you like, but be sure to give your reasons. Return the nomination form to the Chair of the Awards Committee:

Eleanor Zurbrigg
c/o The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club
Box 35069 Westgate P.O.
Ottawa, ON
K1Z 1A2

If you have any questions regarding the nominations, feel free to contact Eleanor Zurbrigg, Chair of the Awards Committee, through the Club number at 613-722-3050, or at the Club website ofnc@ofnc.ca.

NOMINATION FORM FOR AWARDS

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

In the appropriate spaces, please submit the names of those you wish to nominate for OFNC awards and your reasons for each nomination. The more information you provide, the more effective will be the assessment of nominees. Attach additional information if the space is inadequate. Nominations may be made for more than one person. The Awards Committee may contact you for further information regarding any of your nominations.

Name of Nominator: _____ Email _____
Address: _____ Telephone _____

HONORARY MEMBER: This award is presented in recognition of outstanding contributions by a member, or non-member, to Canadian natural history or to the successful operation of the Club. [Usually people awarded an honorary membership have made extensive contributions over many years. At present honorary membership is limited to 25 people.]

Nominee _____

Reasons for the nomination _____

MEMBER OF THE YEAR: In recognition of the member judged to have contributed the most to the Club in the previous year. [Members of the Executive are excluded from consideration.]

Nominee _____

Reasons for the nomination _____

GEORGE MCGEE SERVICE AWARD: In recognition of a member or members who has (have) contributed significantly to the smooth running of the Club over several years. [Members of the Executive are excluded from consideration.]

Nominee_____

Reasons for the nomination_____

ANNE HANES NATURAL HISTORY AWARD: In recognition of a member who, through independent study or investigation, has made a worthwhile contribution to our knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the natural history of the Ottawa Valley. [The award is designed to recognize work that is done by amateur naturalists.]

Nominee_____

Reasons for the nomination_____

EDUCATION AWARD: For members, non-members or organizations, in recognition for outstanding achievements in the field of natural history education in the Ottawa Region. Potential recipients would include museum personnel (both professional and volunteer), biology teachers, talented and dedicated field trip leaders, authors popularizing local natural history, and other educators of children or adults.

Nominee:_____

Reasons for nomination:_____

but a load of sheep manure dumped on the site seemed to put an end to anymore such shenanigans.

We did, however, have a problem of a different nature. A young man set up camp under a stand of conifers just south of the Ravine. The first sign of his presence was an old blanket left under the trees. But as time went by, he created quite an encampment with a sleeping bag, towels, rolls of toilet paper, stacks of canned food, clothing hung up on the trees, and even a latrine under one of the Norway spruce. A length of pink flagging tape marked the entrance to his camp. We reported him to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) Security and to the Police but it seemed at first that nothing could be done about moving him on, and we were given various reasons why. Finally, we decided that some of us would go and remove his belongings when he was away, hoping that would induce him to leave. Before this could happen, Security finally dealt with the issue, only to have him return several times. Eventually, about five or six weeks after he first set up camp, he left, for good we think, unless he managed to find a spot in a sheltered and unreachable part of the Ravine!

Habitats

Butterfly Meadow

A significant amount of work was done on the Butterfly Meadow in 2010 with dozens of flowers planted and large areas cleared of DSV and raspberry canes. Best of all, a large water tank was finally installed adjacent to the site, and regularly filled with water by AAFC. You can imagine how much easier this makes watering the new plants, not only at the meadow, but at other locations away from the centre. In the past, the water had to be hauled in buckets by cart, to the site! An increase in regular volunteers, as well as help from corporate volunteers over two different days, enabled Diane to carry out many of her plans for the site.

Amphibian Pond

The greatest amount of work in 2010 was done at the Amphibian Pond. The erosion of the trail by several years of heavy spring run-off, and the loss of many of the large rocks from the original dam (they fell down the slope into the ravine), meant that a very unstable situation was created. We also worried that the small bridge would also fall into the ravine and cause injury should someone be on it at the time. Therefore, we blocked off access to the bridge while we looked for a contractor who could do the repair work. Eventually we went with Drummond, the company that built the original dam back in 1991. A much larger spillway was constructed and the dam appears to be good for another 20 years.

The next problem was the bridge. Initially we thought we could just reinstall the old one, but that clearly was not going to work. For one thing, AAFC told us we needed

hand rails for safety reasons. They also said it would be preferable if our bridge conformed to the design they used in the Arboretum, meaning the bridge across the stream to the little island, not the Japanese style bridge near the Canal installed by



The Amphibian Pond bridge, almost ready to use.

the NCC. John Walmsley very generously agreed to design the bridge for us, for free! The next step involved approval by AAFC and then the actual construction could begin. At the time of writing, the bridge is nearly complete, with only a few issues needing to be sorted out. By the time you read this, the new bridge should be very usable!

Plants and Animals

Birds

The new kestrel nest box was not inducement enough, and once again this species was absent. For the first time in many years, Green Herons were largely absent, apart from a brief period of almost daily observations, but their visits were otherwise sporadic. Nor did we have any nesting House Wrens in 2010. After the two successful nests in 2009, I really thought we might see them again, but it was not to be. We did, however, see a Brown Thrasher on and off throughout the summer, although there was no indication of nesting and we didn't see any fledged young

around. An Eastern Towhee was a nice visitor in the spring, and is only one of a handful of times we've seen this species at FWG.

While most of the usual nesting birds successfully raised young, Tree Swallow numbers at the FWG continued to decline. In 2010 we found only six successful nests. We know that all swallow species are declining, but I think that a primary reason for such a dismal showing at FWG is that our habitat continues to change and for swallows it is for the worse (although attractive to other species). We need to move many of the nest boxes to more open situations, although such areas are increasingly rare there. Over the winter we'll have to figure out just what can be done to make the site more attractive to Tree Swallows. On the other hand, Barn Swallows were more commonly observed in 2010 than in any of the previous 10 years! They might be nesting around the Hartwell Locks buildings, though I've not looked. I do know they are not nesting on the red barn by the FWG. Awhile after they arrived back, I checked around the barn and it appeared that a nest was attempted but had been knocked down. Since I cannot say for sure, I will leave it at that!

Two beautiful little male Green-winged Teals appeared at the pond in September but after a few days one left. The other remained at the pond until about the third week in October, resplendent at last in his fresh plumage!

Insects

We added some interesting new insect species to our inventory. Of note was a colony of Klamath weed beetles, a species introduced to control St. John's wort, often known as Klamath Weed. Although relatively common around the region, it was the first time I'd seen them at FWG. In May a very intriguing hover fly was found. *Chalcosyrphus curvaria* is a large orange and black wasp mimic. Not uncommon, but a new species for the FWG. We also found a number of the bumblebee mimic syrphids which really do look astonishingly like bumblebees. We added more leafhopper and treehopper species, and a number of other bugs and beetles, and four more Odonate species. The most interesting observation for me was that of the large black peleciniid wasp (*Pelecinus polyturator*). But even more exciting was the very large and beautiful Ichneumonid wasp, *Megarhyssa macrurus*, found by Peter and Judy Hall near the Ash Woods. Sadly, I did not see it.

We saw a good number of butterflies over the summer including many Red Admirals in what turned out to be a stellar year for this migratory species. Some stopped long enough to lay eggs on the stinging nettle in the Butterfly Meadow. Monarchs were once again few and far between, although as summer wore on, we could sometimes see two or three per day. But the big news was the sighting, not once, but three different times, of an American Snout butterfly at the garden. This very rare species

was first found at FWG in 2008 (Hanrahan 2009). Further observations in 2010 and the probability that there were two of them, gives rise to speculation about a small colony. Keep your eyes peeled for this species next summer. Many more moths were added to our ongoing inventory, thanks to the work of Diane Lepage.

Mammals

Our famous beaver survived the winter and was busy in early spring as the pond melted. However, he didn't stick around too long once the ice left. It didn't help that certain people kept breaking the dam. This not only made life difficult for the beaver, but for us, because with the opening of the dam, water flowed across the path creating far worse erosion than any from spring runoff. Initially the beaver tried to repair the damage, and we helped by piling up the branches flung aside by the vandals (I use that word deliberately). However, we have had visits from several other beaver over the spring and fall, most recently in late October when a young Red Oak on the far side of the pond was gnawed but not taken down. Bridge work didn't initially deter the beaver, it seems, but then the poor animals must be feeling desperate to find a home with winter's approach and suitable habitats vanishing rapidly.

Muskrats appear to be well settled into the pond now, as they have been for the last three or four years. They are proving to be a good ally in the battle against the invasive Flowering Rush. A rather large population appeared in the western end of the pond. I noticed its appearance, watched it grow, and then watched as it vanished, eaten by the muskrat, or rather, the roots were eaten. I wonder if muskrats are being praised for their biocontrol efforts! They should be.

Reptiles and amphibians

In last year's update, I noted that a Red-eared Slider turtle (not native to this area) had turned up in the pond, almost certainly dumped there by someone who could no longer care for it. I wondered if it would survive the winter. Well, it did, and spent the warm months in the pond along with two Snapping turtles, one large Blanding's and two Painted turtles. Now we will see if it, and indeed, if all of the turtles, appear again next year.

We have lists of birds, insects (with separate lists for butterflies, moths and odonates), mammals, reptiles and amphibians, and wildflowers on our website. Just visit this url: www.ofnc.ca/fletcher/alphabet.php, and scroll down the list of wildlife-related subjects to find the lists, and much more.

Photo Galleries

Our photo galleries and FWG Blog on the Pbase galleries, are thriving. As of this writing we've had over 350,000 visits, and over 1,000 comments. We have 68

galleries (many of them are our monthly blogs) and nearly 3,000 images online. Many people contribute their photos from the FWG and occasionally from the adjacent Arboretum. We therefore have a tremendous wealth of intriguing images to show you, for each person sees and photographs different things. Check out our galleries at: www.pbase.com/fwg and let us know what you think!

Volunteer Opportunities

If you would like to volunteer at the FWG, why not drop by any Friday morning spring through fall, 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon, and see what it is all about. You can talk to the volunteers, explore the garden and get a feel for what we do. You can also discuss other volunteer opportunities at the garden while you are there. There is invasive species control, tree planting, or any number of other activities. Regular volunteer groups meet on Friday morning (BYG) and Wednesday evening (Butterfly Meadow), spring through fall.

The FWG is run by a Management Committee and we'd be very happy to see new members. You are welcome to drop by during one of our regular meetings (always the fourth Wednesday of each month, at 7:30 p.m. at FWG) and see what the committee does.

Acknowledgments: As always, thanks to all the volunteers who make FWG happen!

Photos: Christine Hanrahan

References:

- Hanrahan, Christine. 2009. American Snout Butterfly at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden. *T&L* 43(3):117-119.
- Hanrahan, Christine. 2010. Celebrating 20 years of the Fletcher Wildlife Garden: How did we get from there to here? *T&L* 44(4):161-165.

FWG Details and Contact Information

The FWG is located off Prince of Wales Drive on the Central Experimental Farm. For more information please visit the website at: www.ofnc.ca/fletcher.php. Brochures about the garden are available from the Centre on Friday mornings from spring through fall, Sunday afternoons in the summer, or during the week June through August when we have a summer employee.

- FWG phone number: 613-234-6767
- Sandy Garland: website, information about the FWG and Newsletter: fletcher@ofnc.ca
- Christine Hanrahan: bird and wildlife observations: vanessa@magma.ca
- AAFC Security: 613-759-1985

Past Musings: Listen to the Plants Grow!

Editor's Note: This article was previously published in the 1968 March - April issue of *T&L*. Author Anne Hanes had, humourously, brought to light something I am sure many of us have heard and thought about.

Our phone rang one evening in late April last year, and my husband picked up the receiver. "Hello? Yes, Paul . . . No, have you? . . . I see. We'll go out and listen. Goodnight." "That was Paul" he said as he hung up. Paul is our neighbour—I'll call him Paul to protect his identity, since his real name is Peter. "Paul says you can hear the plants growing."

This idea was a new one to us, but Paul is a plant physiologist, and one doesn't argue with a plant physiologist about such things, at least not before investigating. We picked up flashlights and stepped outside.

It was a mild, calm evening. Nothing stirred—so we thought at first. We stood at the edge of a wooded area where the ground was covered with dead leaves, just where they had fallen the autumn before. As we listened intently, a faint, almost continuous rustling sound could be heard throughout the area.

"The leaves are just altering their shape due to changes in humidity as the temperature drops," my physicist husband guessed. In the beam of our light, a slight movement here and there directed our attention to the fact that some of the leaves were rising slowly, tipping up at one end, only to drop back in place rather more quickly. "How about moles, tunnelling close to the surface?" was my counter-guess. Somehow we could not bring ourselves to believe in the Plants-Growing theory.

Next morning in the bright sunshine, I stood in a rich bit of bottomland near home, watching the ground. The phenomenon of moving leaves was still operating. As I watched a leaf begin to move, some twenty feet away, I stepped cautiously closer, but the action stopped abruptly whenever I moved. Finally, by standing stock-still, I was able to catch a glimpse of the cause of it all—a fat pink earthworm.

One end of the worm neatly and firmly hooked itself over the leaf and withdrew into the soil below causing the opposite end of the leaf to stand up. If the worm relaxed

its hold, the leaf fell back nearly to the original position, but by taking another hold and giving another pull, the worm eventually drew its leaf completely beneath the surface. Here the leaves become worm-food and leaf-mould, and help to provide the conditions of growth enjoyed by such plants as the fawn lilies which appear in such spectacular array in this area a few weeks later. (Fawn lilies are trout lilies—both names allude to the attractive mottling of the leaves—or if you like, adder's-tongues. They are still called, by some ignorant die-hards, "dogtooth violets," a name which I find both ugly and inappropriate for these charming yellow lilies.)

I announced my findings to Paul later that day. "I'm very glad to know what it really was that we heard" he said. "Actually, though, it was my wife who thought that it might be the plants growing!"

Notice: Upcoming Meeting of the Field Botanists of Ontario (FBO)

Date: April 9-11, 2011

Location: Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa and Gatineau facilities

The FBO, a not-for-profit organization for those interested in botany and conservation in Ontario, is planning a weekend of events in the National Capital region in the spring of 2011. Proposed activities include a behind-the-scenes tour of the collections including the National Herbarium of Canada (at the Gatineau research facility), and a series of speakers followed by dinner at the Museum's newly renovated downtown Ottawa exhibit building.

Local field trips by knowledgeable botanists will follow on Sunday. Immediately following the FBO events, there will be an optional moss identification workshop on Sunday afternoon and Monday, with bryologists Jennifer Doubt and Linda Ley (number of participants is limited).

This event is open to members of all local field naturalists and clubs. Further information on this event, and on the FBO in general, is available at <http://www.trentu.ca/org/fbo/>. To obtain program and registration details as they are developed, email Bill Crowley at fisheye@eagle.ca.

Short-eared Owls

Kathy Jones

Bird Studies Canada is continuing to monitor Short-eared Owls this winter as researchers across North America and Europe try to learn more about this poorly-understood owl that is classified as a species of Special Concern in Canada. Using satellite and radio telemetry, and volunteer-supplied observations, Bird Studies Canada (Ontario Region) has tracked large- and small-scale movements of Short-eared Owls in Canada for the past three seasons, and plans to continue during winter 2010-2011.

To assist in this important project, Bird Studies Canada is asking community members to report any sightings of Short-eared Owls that they see in Ontario this winter; please include:

- Your name and contact information
- Date and time of sighting
- Habitat (grassy field, pasture, marsh, etc.)
- Number of birds seen
- Behaviour (flying, perching, hunting)
- Detailed location of sighting (geographical coordinates preferred)

If you would like to report a sighting, (or know of a site that hosts wintering Short-eared Owls), please contact Kathy Jones, Ontario Volunteer Coordinator, at 1-888-448-2473 ext.124, or volunteer@birdscanada.org.

Data from this study will allow the determination of seasonal habitats occupied by the owl, and identify important breeding and wintering sites. Updates on our satellite-tracked owls are available through our Owl Tracker at: <http://www.birdscanada.org/research/speciesatrisk/seow/index.jsp?targetpg=owltracker>. Sightings from other provinces can be directed to www.ebird.ca.

Coming Events

arranged by the Excursions & Lectures Committee.

For further information,
call the Club number (613-722-3050).

Times stated for excursions are departure times. Please arrive earlier; leaders start promptly. If you need a ride, don't hesitate to ask the leader. Restricted trips will be open to non-members only after the indicated deadlines.

ALL OUTINGS: *Please bring a lunch on full-day trips and dress according to the weather forecast and activity. Binoculars and/or spotting scopes are essential on all birding trips. Unless otherwise stated, transportation will be by car pool.*

REGISTERED BUS TRIPS: *Make your reservation for Club bus excursions by sending a cheque or money order (Payable to The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club) to Box 35069, Westgate P.O., Ottawa, Ontario, K1Z 1A2, at least ten days in advance. Include your name, address, telephone number and the name of the outing. Your cooperation is appreciated by the Committee so that we do not have to wait until the last moment to decide whether a trip should be cancelled due to low registration. In order for the Club to offer a bus trip, we need just over 33 people to register. If fewer than 30 register, we have the option of cancelling the trip or increasing the cost. Such decisions must be done a week in advance, so we encourage anyone who is interested in any bus trip to register as early as possible. We also wish to discourage postponing the actual payment of bus fees until the day of the event.*

EVENTS AT THE CANADIAN MUSEUM OF NATURE: *The Club is grateful to the Museum for their cooperation, and thanks the Museum for the use of these excellent facilities. Monthly meetings are held in the theatre in the basement. Attendees may have to pay \$5 parking per vehicle.*

BIRD STATUS LINE: *Phone 613-860-9000 to learn of recent sightings or birding potential in the Ottawa area. To report recent sightings use the 613-860-9000 number and stay on the line. This service is run on behalf of the Birds Committee and is available to members and non-members.*

Tuesday	OFNC MONTHLY MEETING
18 January	THE 132ND ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING
7:00 p.m.	Location: Canadian Museum of Nature (VMMB), Metcalfe and McLeod Streets, Theatre, Basement.
Review of Minutes	The Council for 2011 will be elected at this meeting. There will be a brief review of the activities in 2010 and a statement of the Club's finances will be given. This is an opportunity to meet most of the Club's Executive and the chairs of the various committees and find out what makes your Club tick. If anything from the President's Perspective or Conservation Matters sparked any thoughts, please express them at this meeting. Your input at the ABM is one way Council hears from its members.
7:30 p.m.	
Meeting called to order	

Sunday	MUDPUPPY NIGHT IN OXFORD MILLS
23 January	*Kid Friendly*
6:00 p.m.	Leader: Fred Schueler (coordinator Fenja Brodo 613-723-2054) Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, near Pizza Pizza or about 7:00 p.m. at the Brigadoon Restaurant, 11 Bridge St., Oxford Mills (613-258-4433).
"Rain" date	Seeing and handling these Mudpuppies is a very popular trip for our Club, therefore we have scheduled an alternate date (30 Jan.) in case poor viewing conditions are predicted for 23 Jan.. Please check with Fenja before heading out!
Sunday	First we plan to meet upstairs at the Brigadoon Restaurant, Oxford Mills, for hot refreshments and an introduction to these unique creatures by Dr. Fred Schueler. He will show us a Mudpuppy or two and tell us why they are the subject of his research. Then we shall head outside, across the road, to the best Mudpuppy viewing in Ontario; 20-50 might be seen actively moving in the clear shallow, often ice-covered water. The flat bedrock provides safe footing. This event is lots of fun for kids.
30 January	Please dress very warmly. Warm rubber boots allow participants to step into the cold water but much can be seen from the shore. A strong flashlight is recommended. [Note: Mudpuppy Night in Oxford Mills occurs every Friday through the winter and the public is always invited. Visit http://pinicola.ca/mudpup1.htm for details, join the NatureList (http://groups.google.com/group/naturelist/about?hl=en) for regular updates.]
6:00 p.m.	

Car pooling on excursions is very much encouraged and that is why we usually try to meet at a convenient bus stop with a good place to leave a car unattended for a few hours. Please chip in for gas.

Saturday
29 January
2:00 p.m.
 to
4:00 p.m.

SMALL MAMMAL WORKSHOP
Kid Friendly
Leader: Dr. Don Smith
Meet: Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretation Centre, Prince of Wales Drive, just south of the traffic circle.
 Don will be showing his collection of study skins and skulls of about 35 species of small mammals found in eastern Ontario and adjacent Quebec. We will have an opportunity to handle them, and to see up close, the many defining characteristics of the shrews, moles, bats, squirrels, mice and weasels that occur around Ottawa.

Tuesday
8 February
7:00 p.m.
Social & Club
Business

7:30 p.m.
Formal
Program

OFNC MONTHLY MEETING
AROUND MY FEET: IN THE FIELD WITH GEORGE DAWSON
(PRESIDENT, OFNC, 1891-94)
Speaker: Phil Jenkins
Location: Canadian Museum of Nature (VMMB), Metcalfe and McLeod Streets, Theatre, Basement
 As well as becoming the head of the Geological Survey of Canada, George Mercer Dawson (1849-1901) was a superb naturalist who was taught natural history by Thomas Huxley. In his wide-ranging years in the field (1871-1895) as an observing artist, photographer and poet, he wrote well and true of the landscape and its inhabitants. Phil will share extracts from Dawson's lifelong reports which began at the age of six.

Saturday
19 February
8:30 a.m.

SNOWSHOEING TO BARRON CANYON IN ALGONQUIN PARK
Kid Friendly
Leaders: Jeff and Angela Skevington (613-832-1970)
Meet: 8:00 am at carpool parking lot, NE corner of intersection of Highway 417 and Co. Rd. 29 (just east of Arnprior) (exit from Hwy. 417 and parking lot is just north of highway on the right (east) side).
 This full day outing is to one of the most spectacular winter wonderlands in eastern Ontario. The Barron Canyon is amazing to see in the summer but in the winter it is an unparalleled experience. You will need snowshoes for this outing (they can be rented at most of the outfitters in town if you don't have your own). Don't worry if you haven't snowshoed before, it isn't that rigorous a trip. We will also explore a few other areas in the park during our visit. Winter finches, ravens and even eagles are possible. We will try some wolf howling too, you never know what we might see or hear. There is a two hour drive to get there so we will be in the field from about 10:30 am to 3:30 pm. Bring a field lunch and expect to be home by 5:30 pm.

Sunday
27 February
8:30 a.m.

ALGONQUIN PARK BIRD WALK

Leader: Gord Belyea

Meet: Parking Lot at the beginning of the Arowhon Road which is also the Mizzy Lake trailhead. Arowhon Rd (off Hwy 60) shows up on Google Maps if you zoom in.

This outing will require (for the 8:30 a.m. start) that participants drive to Dwight, Ontario, on the west side of Algonquin Park on Saturday and to stay in a motel overnight. Gray Jays are the target birds. Potentially, several families of Gray Jays, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Black-capped Chickadees, Hairy Woodpeckers, Black-Backed Woodpeckers could be seen.

The weather cannot be predicted for that day, but it will be winter in Algonquin. Common sense should prevail when participants select their outerwear for the walk. Temperatures in Algonquin can, at times, be colder than Ottawa. Skis or snowshoes are required to traverse the trail, however, it should be noted that the entire trail is totally flat. Expect to be on this trail for about 3 to 4 hours. At the end of this portion of the day, participants can head east for Ottawa, or Gord will accompany the group further east in the Park (which makes the return trip to Ottawa a little shorter) to the Spruce Boardwalk for more Gray Jays etc. A pit stop at the Visitor Centre is optional at that point. A subsequent visit further east to the Opeongo/Cameron Lake intersection for more birds will round out the day. From there everyone heads off home.

Food and drinks are the individuals' responsibility for the day. For Mizzy Lake Trail, the only bathroom facilities are at the trailhead—otherwise it's THE WOODS!

There is a \$15 park visitor pass, per vehicle, which can be picked up at the gate for day use of the park. An annual Parks Ontario visitor pass is good for Algonquin visits. This trip would only be cancelled under a severe weather condition like a bad storm that makes driving too dangerous.

Gord Belyea and Ann MacKenzie will host participants at their cottage on Lake of Bays, 1060-1 Seabreeze Rd, off Hwy 35, 6 km south of Dwight, on Saturday February 26 from 1 to 4 pm. Gord has maintained a Bird Studies Canada - Feederwatch Site there for the past 13 seasons, so there will be plenty of birds to observe.

Registration is required. We will send you suggestions for accommodation and let you know if the trip must be cancelled due to weather conditions. To register, email Julia Cipriani at cipriani@magi.com. Please enter Algonquin Park Bird Walk in the subject line of your email. Maximum 20 participants—OFNC members will be given preference.

Sunday **WINTER FEEDER TOUR**
March 6 ***Kid-Friendly***
8:00 a.m. **Leader:** Terry Higgins
to **Meet:** Jack Pine Trail parking lot #9
12:00 noon Finding birds in winter can be a challenge, even for seasoned birders. Fortunately the OFNC and others maintain feeders during the winter months, making birdwatching much easier for birders who brave the elements. On this trip we will visit feeders in the west end of Ottawa. Please dress warmly for the weather and bring along a hot drink. Binoculars and bird seed (for the Jack Pine Chickadees) are not essential, but would be welcome.

Tuesday	OFNC MONTHLY MEETING
8 March	HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
7:00 p.m.	ONLINE, FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR DESK CHAIR
Social & Club	Speaker: Jay Fitzsimmons, PhD student, Biology Department,
Business	University of Ottawa
	Location: Canadian Museum of Nature (VMMB), Metcalfe and McLeod Streets, Theatre, Basement
7:30 p.m.	The Internet is changing not only how scientific research is done,
Formal	but also who is doing it. More and more projects are being
Program	developed that rely on non-experts volunteering their time to do research. Many of these projects require little from volunteers: a computer, an Internet connection, the ability to follow instructions, and curiosity about the natural world. Jay will review examples of projects covering a broad range of subjects from birdwatching to astronomy, and provide information on how you too can make a meaningful contribution to ongoing scientific projects from the comfort of your own home.

Sunday **MEETING OF THE FIELD BOTANISTS OF ONTARIO**
April 10 **Location:** Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa and Gatincau facilities.
to Local field trips by knowledgeable botanists are on Sunday and there is an optional moss identification workshop on Sunday afternoon and Monday. The Field Botanists of Ontario has opened these events to members of all local field naturalists' clubs. See page 21 for more details.
Monday
April 11

Car pooling on excursions is very much encouraged and that is why we usually try to meet at a convenient bus stop with a good place to leave a car unattended for a few hours. Please chip in for gas.

Sunday
17 April
3:00 p.m.
to
about
5:00 p.m.

RIDEAU CANAL FISH WATCHING

Kid Friendly

Leaders: Hume Douglas and Dr. Steven Cooke or others from Carleton University's Fish Ecology and Conservation Physiology Lab.

Meet: Parking lot of Sunnyside Branch of the Ottawa Public Library, 1049 Bank St.

In April many kinds of fish leave Dow's Lake for the warmer water of the mostly drained canal. Join us for this special chance to watch fish as many begin their courtship and spawning periods. If the weather is warm we can expect to see Yellow Perch, Pumpkinseed, Bluegill, Largemouth Bass, White Sucker, Common Carp, and possibly also Black Crappie, Muskellunge and others. Macnamara Field Naturalists' Club members are also invited to this event. Bring polarized sunglasses if you have them. Please call the Club number (613-722-3050) to register. More information about Dr. Cooke's research can be found at:

<http://www.carleton.ca/fecpl/>.

Saturday
30 April
8:00 a.m.

SPRING IN CONSTANCE BAY

Kid Friendly

Leader: Jeff and Angela Skevington (613-832-1970)

Meet: 146 Monty Drive, Constance Bay. To get to Constance Bay, take the 417 to the March Road exit in Kanata. Take March Road several km to Dunrobin Road. Follow Dunrobin road past Dunrobin and Woodlawn to Constance Bay Drive. Follow Constance Bay Drive then take the second right onto Monty. 146 Monty is on your right after about 500 m.

This is a full day outing but you are welcome to come for only the morning if you wish. Bring a lunch and expect to be home by about 4:00 pm. Constance Bay is a lot of fun in late April. Early warblers (Pine and Yellow-rumped for example), Common Loon, Red-shouldered Hawk, Virginia Rail, Eastern Phoebe, Hermit Thrush, and lots of sparrows including Fox, Chipping and White-throated should all be back. If we get a sunny day it should be fun for insect watching too. Late April is a great time to see early butterflies and a variety of insects that can't be seen the rest of the year. Some of the pussy willows will be loaded with pollinating insects if the day is warm enough. Early season frogs,

salamanders and some early season flowers are also possible depending on how advanced the season is. Macnamara Field Naturalist members are also invited to this event so come out and meet some new kindred spirits.

Saturday
7 May
7:00 a.m.
to
about
11:00 a.m.

**BANDING DEMONSTRATION AND BIRDING AT THE
INNIS POINT BIRD OBSERVATORY (IPBO)**

Leader: Dave Britton

Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot near Pizza Pizza, Richmond Road at Assaly Road. For over 25 years, the Innis Point Bird Observatory has been operating along the Ottawa River just north of Shirley's Bay on the Connaught Rifle Range property. This visit to the IPBO takes place during the annual Spring Migration Monitoring Program and we will have an opportunity to observe the banding operations, including a demonstration of mist netting and banding techniques. We will also have an opportunity to bird some of the diverse habitats on the property, from the Ottawa River to shrub alvar, swamps, coniferous and mixed forest and old fields. Due to space limitations related to parking and access to the mist nets and banding station, attendance is limited to 15 participants. Please call the Club number (613-722-3050) to register.

Car pooling on excursions is very much encouraged and that is why we usually try to meet at a convenient bus stop with a good place to leave a car unattended for a few hours. Please chip in for gas.

DEADLINE: *Material intended for the April - June issue must be in the editor's hands by 1 February, 2011. Mail your manuscripts to:*

Karen McLachlan Hamilton
2980 Moodie Drive, Nepean, ON, K2J 4S7
H: (613) 838-4943; email: hamilton@storm.ca

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ISSN 0041-0748



TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

Published by

THE OTTAWA FIELD-NATURALISTS' CLUB

Postage paid in cash at Ottawa

Change of Address Notices and Undeliverable Copies:

Box 35069, Westgate P.O.

Ottawa, K1Z 1A2

Return postage guaranteed

Printed by
LOMOR PRINTING